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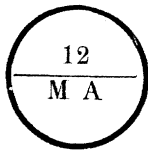
LETTERS FROM HON. HENRY LAURENS TO HIS
SON JOHN, 1773-1776.

[Continued from the October number.]

[20.]

Addressed : Mr John Laurens
at Mr C. Bicknell's
Chancery Lane
⌘ Ship Mermaid
Capt Yowart
2 D Ct ↘, London.

Postmarked : Cowes
Ship LRES



Sunbury in Georgia 27th March 1775.

My Dear Son ↘,

My last Letter to you of the date of 20th february went by the Sandwick packet—five days after, I embarked for Broughton Island where I have been passing upwards of

three Weeks & am now on my road to Wright's Savanna and thence to Charles Town from whence I shall write to you by the earliest opportunity. I have not time at present for a long Letter although subjects are not wanting, but through the misconduct of the prime conductor of my large Canoe Black Snake, you remember her, I was detained four days longer at the Island than I could well have spared & have reached this place barely time enough for making up very brief dispatches for Capt Yowart whose Ship The Mermaid contains the produce of Broughton Island & New Hope, being 558 Barrells & 70 half Barr^s of Rice together with 101. Barrells—part of Wright's Savanna Crop.

tell my friends M^r Oswald & M^r Elliott, M^r Tucker and M^r. Taylor how sorry I am, to be deprived of an opportunity of serving them by a visit to their Estates in East Florida the Resolutions of Carolina forbid it & I dare not disobey I hope I shall be at liberty, next time I come this way which will probably be in the Month of May—those Altamaha Estates are too valuable to be neglected & my presence is of no small advantage to them—

Salute my Dear Boys Harry & James with the remembrance of papa's Love & regard for them, I cannot write to them by this opportunity but you may tell them that at Broughton Island on the 21st Inst I dined on a Rock Fish, a very fine one, of 15 Inches long & upward of a pound & half Weight which Carpenter John, caught in the Air from upward of 60 feet high & it was hooked in the back—if they cant explain this riddle my next shall do it for them — Salute also all my friends with my best Compliments & accept your Dear self, the repeated assurances of the constant Love & Esteem of your faithful & affectionate Father.

Henry Laurens.

M^r John Laurens.

Endorsed : 27th March.

Cap^t Yowart.

[21.]

Addressed: Mr John Laurens.
 at Mr C. Bicknell's
 Chancery Lane
 ② Dutchess of Gordon
 Cap^t Campbell London.
 2 D C^t ↗

Charles Town So. Carolina 8th April
 1775.

My Dear Son ↗

The 27th Ult^o I addressed you from Sunbury in Georgia by the Mermaid Capt Yowart & the same day proceeded to Wright's Savanna where I found full employment for five days, thence came forward by the Inland passage & reached our old home the 4th Inst^t having lodged not above three Nights in full view of the most beautiful Ceiling in the universe—I found among many other Letters which were waiting for me yours of the 3^d January, I cannot pay the particular attention to it at present which is due; 'tis only four days you see since my arrival or return here & every hour of the time has been fully engaged; relading & returning the Canoe which you know is a tedious piece of business, attendance on Committees, listning to long details & solicitations to serve in the old character of sober Arbitrator, visiting your Uncle & Sister who are both unwell with other affairs have reduced me to Candle light Saturday Night & at the same time I feel a sincere inclination to be lazy for the remainder of the Week, I want to sit quietly by yon fireside & to avoid even the fatigue of thinking—let it suffice therefore that I tell you, I am safe at home and in perfect good health with allowance for the circumstances above mentioned—Remember me to all friends I shall pay my respects very soon to several of them, particularly Salute the Dear Boys your Brothers with kisses & caresses

from me & chide them for neglecting to write to papa—
if this Ship is detained a day longer than tomorrow you will
receive another Letter by her from

Your affectionate Father

Henry Laurens.

Mr Manigault ²³ has been consulting me to day on sending
Mr Gabriel ²⁴ to Europe.—I do not think it impossible but
that you may accompany him to Genevé—do not engage
your self for the long Vacation till you hear further—this
between our selves—.

Mr John Laurens.—

Endorsed : 8th April
Campbell.

[22.]

Addressed : Mr John Laurens
at Mr C Bicknell's
Chancery Lane
¶ Heart of Oak.
under cover to London.
W Manning Esquire—

Charles Town So Carolina 23^d May 1775—

My Dear Son—.

You will receive a few Lines from me ¶ this conveyance
by the hands of Mr Ga Manigault dated if at all the 20th
Inst my late addresses were under the 17th & 15th ¶ Le
Dispenser—.

²³ Gabriel Manigault (1704-1781), a rich merchant of Charles Town of Huguenot extraction.

²⁴ His grandson, Gabriel, son of his only son, Peter (1731-1773), a distinguished lawyer of Charles Town. (See Vol. III. of this magazine, p. 87.)

Mr Manning will shew you what I have written to him by Capt Gunn & the Contents of a paper inclosed—wait on the Author of that paper pay the respects due to a Gentleman whom your Father regards in his general Character & offer your service to the Young Mr Savage—

under this Cover you will find Governor Martin's Speech engendered at the plantation Office White hall & midwived by the Governor in North Carolina together with such an Answer from the House of Assembly as will damp the hopes of Lords North & Dartmouth, & shew them the weakness of their endeavours by flattery or otherwise to break a Link of our Chain.—

Your Uncle will sail in Curling about the 28th Inst by his hand you will receive a larger Letter from me—

I have sent under Capt Gunn's care three very fine Turtle for Mr Manning Mr Stead & yourself one each. I shall not have time to write to Mr Stead do you take the trouble to acquaint him—if your Turtle is delivered alive I request you to invite yours & mine, Carolina & other friends just a sufficient set to consume him with decency & let the whole expence be set apart to my Account.

Harry & Jemmy shall have a Letter each by their Sister Patty—my Love to them & you & present me respectfully to all friends & say where is Mr & Mrs Oswald I never hear from them—My Dear Son farewell, may God guide and protect you—

Henry Laurens,

Mr John Laurens—

Endorsed: 23^d May.

Gunn.

[23.]

Addressed : Mr John Laurens
at Mr C Bicknell's
Chancery Lane
by the hands of
Mr James Laurens—
London.

Charles Town So Carolina 30th May 1775.

I refer you my Dear Son to a Letter begun the 27th & very abruptly concluded yesterday Morning on board the Ship London, then going as we all expected very cleverly over Charles Town Bar, I took an affecting leave of our Dear friends but within half an hour after I had left them, the Wind veered suddenly about & Capt Curling judged it prudent to return again into Rebellion Road, this baulk is the more mortifying as Capt White who sailed from the Road with Curling went well to Sea.—I am just now returned from a Morning visit in which I found Your Uncle Aunt & Sisters after a little qualmishness yesterday, pretty well recovered; very cheerful; telling many stories of the brilliancy of your Aunt's Nonpariel, of whom, every thing that is said, is in the superlative—& I dare say there is not another Girl between the Ship & Sullivans Island who says so many pretty things in a Week as Miss Polly said between 8 & 12 oClock yesterday Morning, in a word you will find her to be the Swan of my flock.—the Wind continues unfavorable & I shall pay my respects to them again to Morrow Morning & in the hands of your Uncle add this to the trouble which I have already given you & as I have taken up the pen to write to you in preference of every other friend perhaps I may still require the apology to Mr Izard & Mr Henderson. ~

I was going on the 27th to desire you to reflect seriously on my proposition for sending your Brother James to Genevé, & to carry it into execution if you have no such weighty ob-

jections as may induce you to delay the measure until you may confer with me on the subject; observing also that unless we are soon to be restored to peace & former state of Liberty & Commerce it will not be in our power to afford the expence of removing him from Winson Green; if America is held in her present unhappy circumstances we must be content to keep him there at least till better times enable or necessity oblige us to make a different arrangement—such necessity may arise from the demise of the present Old Master or from his falling more off from the ancient establishment of his School.

You perceive my Dear John how anxiously I attend to the advancement of this little fellow, his abilities demand encouragement but hitherto he has not had the same advantages as his elder Brothers enjoyed—Examine carefully & inform me what progress he has made in Latin Grammar & in Arithmetic; Virtuous liberal Educations to my Children may be the only Estates with which kind providence will permit me to endow them, it is my Duty to redeem the time, I may *now* emphatically add, “because the Days are Evil.” My confidence is in you to second & support my attempts—I know you will duly consider all that I have said & repeated on this important subject & act the part of a Brother & kind Guardian.—

On Thursday the 1st June the Provincial Congress, & on the same day the General Assembly are to meet in Charles Town, if the Lt Governor permits the latter to do business & we are told he will, methinks there will be some hazard of Clashing Jurisdictions or that Congress will have but few subjects come regularly before them.—

The grand affairs in contemplation are,—A general association for mutual & defences, the Copy of which I sent you in my Letter of the 15th—this is intended also to operate as a Test—

Raising two Regiments of Infantry & one of Dragoons or Rangers *—which according to my opinion formed upon

experience & knowledge of the Country will produce, certain heavy Taxes, much fraud & confusion—the plan will never be carried fully into execution but all the Money provided will be fully expended—a project calculated to gratify the necessities of some & the vanity of others—I hope we shall at least curtail it a half. —

Prohibiting the exportation of all kinds of provisions for a limited time. In our present circumstances no considerable Evils can arise from this measure.

Providing Money for Payment of every Member of the Provincial Congress during his attendance—calculated to keep some from the remote parts of the Province Quiet. — Another project which I am not yet at Liberty to divulge, if this shall unhappily be adopted, all our Estates in Charles Town may & probably will be reduced in Value at least 9/10 ^{this} in fact Charles Town as a Trading City will be ruined—it will be a second Antwerp on the Scheld.

a few of us have so successfully opposed this mad scheme as to obtain a delay from time to time,—I hope we shall now turn it out of Doors.

An assessment of Estates in order to Levy Taxes for public services—Stamping & Issuing paper Money for the present exigencies of the Colony—consequently the establishment of a Treasury & appointment of a Treasurer. —

These are but a few of the Grand Articles which are to come before us—upon some Mens minds the consideration sits light & easy, upon mine the total change of Government before we have framed a better or indeed any regular Mode, has its proper weight & influence.

My friend who so smartly replied, “he saw nothing to make him Cry”—see my Letter 22^d January—begins now to have the horrors—, he now vehemently exclaims—“our safety & success will be found in a virtuous observance of our Nonimportation & Nonexportation Resolutions—every thing beyond is hazardous & may lead us into Ruin”

I foresaw the Evil of taking the Ruins into unskilful hands

& have been uniform in my sentiments & declarations but I shall find a task of extreme difficulty in steering an honest Course I will steer no other, be the consequence what it may.

To-morrow the General Committee will meet early & prepare matter for the Congress, if this Ship²⁵ is detained & any important subject intervenes you shall be informed by a Letter in the Evening—but I shall add no more to this save a repetition of my most Cordial salutes to you my Dear Son & to your Brothers—Henry Laurens,

* I have jocularly but very truly hinted to the advocates for this scheme that their Regiments will not be called the Ragged—but Naked—Regiments—We have no Cloths, Tents nor Blankets for them—but tis the way of us hot Country People to provide only for the present Season—

Mr. John Laurens. S

Endorsed: 30th May 1775.

[24.]

Addressed: Mr. John Laurens
at Mr. C. Bicknell's
Chancery Lane
P Scorpion
Man of War
London—
Via Boston

Charles Town So Carolina 2^d July 1775

My Dear Son—

Be referred if you please to my last Letter or Letters dated the 18th & 23^d Ult^o & conveyed by the Rabbit Capt

²⁵ "Since our last, James Laurens, Esq; and Mrs. Laurens, two Misses Laurens, Daughters of Col. Laurens, Mr. Robert Mackenzie, sen and Mrs. Mackenzie, Capt. A. Alexander and Mrs. Alexander, and others, have embarked and sailed for England."—*The South-Carolina and American General Gazette*, Friday, June 2, 1775. See also *The South-Carolina Gazette; And Country Journal*, Tuesday June 6, 1775.

Fraser, I have no doubt of its reaching you even if Lord North or LeDespenser should first fathom its Innocent contents—the opportunity by which this is to be sent is offered to me very suddenly & unexpectedly by Capt Innis, who assures me that my Letters shall pass unopened—I thank him for his politeness & friendship, but the King's Decyphlerer must be very cunning if he is able to pick a plot out of my Epistles, notwithstanding each of them contains at least one & some of them contain more—at present however my Treason will be very plain, I am just risen from Dinner am stinted to a minute for delivery of my Letters, & perceive that I have written to your Uncle what I might better have said to you & that I must fill up part of a page by writing to you what should have been more properly the subject of conversation with him, between both, though badly arranged, you will receive the intelligence our Town affords without one word to justify the scandalous imputation which his Majesty has thrown upon us of Rebellion—

Our Summer hitherto has been pleasant, constant breezes from Sea or fresh Land Winds have conducted us safely through the Month of June & we have entered July with as much temperance as reasonable beings in Lat: 32 & 45. can wish for.—I do not know what business the Medical Field may have in general—in my own domains thank God they have none—but the Sextons if nothing better for them happens must soon come upon the Parish—Liberty & Cool weather are friendly to the Lungs—

Some time ago we dreaded from the vast falls of Rain the total loss of our Crops of Rice & indeed a few are totally lost, but in general from a favourable change they are now good & if no disaster happens in Earing or Harvest will be as large as usual, the Indian Corn is still better, Wheat abundant and Indigo very well but what of all this in a port Locked up & the Key in Lord Norths pocket—I never saw Charles Town Harbour so naked as it is just now only two topsail Vessels in it—except about five days ago when there was but one—

My Garden looks as charmingly as a Garden can look without its proper Guests, I have indeed vast increase of Mocking Birds. Grapes plentiful, peaches Ripe sooner & Nectarines better than common & very fine, Figs Damsons & plumbs in abundance, Old Stepny always sober, & daily refreshing showers, but alas! what are these without my best friends without my Sons and my Daughters—I will say no more on this head, but turn my Eye more attentively to your Letter of the 5th May ꝑ Harford & Jennings of the 25 April—the little Rogue writes a good hand & by your aid will advance if not excel in other branches of useful learning—

I am glad you are “better pleased with the Law as you advance in the Study” once persuade yourself of the necessity for studying & you will really advance & really be pleased. —otherwise you may experience a worse necessity—nothing more need be said to you than—Do, what you *know* you ought to do—lift up your Eyes to the Bench, to eminent Character, withdraw them from Idle amusements & groveling indulgences, emulate great & good Men & you will do Honour to your Father, to your Country & to the founder of a great Family, do you give diligence & you will have no cause to blame nature nor fortune.

Harry’s progress is very pleasing to me, stimulate those Dear Boys by every means in your power to be diligent & to improve in their learning, but let them & let their Country reap some fruit from their Father’s endeavours to give them good Education—but the minute approaches, 7 o’clock James says is the latest Capt Innis can keep his Packet open for me, I must in a word repeat, take care of your Brothers of your Sisters, take care of yourself, but let me hear from you by all possible opportunities & never omit to inform me of every essential matter in our American affairs as far as you can learn You apprehend a bloody event to our disputes there is now room to dread it more than ever, but I do not retreat as danger approaches, I only pray that God will enable me in every trial to do my Duty—all will be well

again my Son—the people in England, I mean the Ruling people, are wrong, they will be convinced of it ere long—our Constitution admits of putting such Rulers aside & restoring harmony without hurting that Constitution—I hope Mrs Manning & Mr Stead have better health than when you wrote, my best respects to them & to every other friend. My Dear Son I pray God to bless you to give you discretion accompanied by laudable ambition--

Henry Laurens.

Mr John Laurens.

Endorsed: 2^d July 1775.

[*To be continued in the next number of this magazine.*]